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4 U.S. Agencies Said to Target Whistleblower

Four government agencies are ganging up to discredit a lone whistleblower. He is Ralph Sharer, the counterintelligence expert who uncovered shocking evidence that the Soviet KGB had obtained top-secret documents from the General Accounting Office.

Sharer's report on the KGB penetration obviously shook GAO high-ups, who responded first by exiling him to a do-nothing job and then by arranging his transfer to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. It wasn't long before the indefatigable Sharer found evidence of waste and corruption at NASA. The agency's reaction was to order Sharer fired on questionable charges.

The third federal agency embarrassed by Sharer is the FBI, which has spent two years in a vain effort to uncover the Soviet espionage at the GAO. The G-men are now trying to pretend they never heard of Sharer, even though they earlier thought highly of him.

Most disturbing of all is the latest

action by the Office of Special Counsel, the independent agency created specifically to protect government employees who blow the whistle on misconduct by their superiors.

When I first broke the story of Sharer's troubles, I praised the OSC for standing behind Sharer. The counsel's office did what it's supposed to do: It obtained an injunction forbidding NASA to fire Sharer until a thorough investigation of his charges had been made.

But now, I regret to say, the OSC has suddenly knuckled under and withdrawn its protection without having looked into Sharer's allegations against NASA.

Sharer will get his full investigation, however. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee is already looking into the bureaucratic vendetta against him, and the Senate Intelligence Committee has been asked by Sen. William V. Roth Jr. (R-Del.) to conduct a thorough investigation of the KGB-GAO scandal.

Sharer himself has provided an excellent map for Senate investigators trying to find their way through the jungle of bureaucratic cover-up and obfuscation. It's a 200-page report, including substantiating documents, which details both his GAO and his NASA investigations, and the reprisals he suffered for his diligence. My associates Indy Badhwar and Dale Van Atta have seen Shar-

er's report, and it's a bombshell that could blow up a lot of high-level swivelchairs.

Sharer tells how, working first on his own and then with the FBI, he established that someone inside the GAO was feeding a known Soviet KGB official, Vladimir Kvasov, the publication numbers of extremely sensitive reports on military programs being audited by the agency. The Soviet spy then asked for and obtained the reports at the GAO documents counter. He unwittingly gave the game away by requesting some reports before they had even been published.

Sharer recounts the attempted cover-up of the spy scandal by top GAO officials, his banishment to a study of marine mammals, and his eventual transfer to NASA. There he discovered that his colleagues in the inspector general's office were guilty of the same kind of cheating they were supposed to be uncovering in other departments of the agency. In retaliation, NASA held up his salary; he has not been paid for four months.

The Sharer report then tells how his NASA bosses got another IG's office, the Housing and Urban Development Department's, to "investigate" his charges. Instead, the HUD team whitewashed its fellow IG office and delivered a personal attack on Sharer.